DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 100 948 SP 008 758

AUTHOR Eriksson, Karl Henrik
TITLE Qualitative Evaluation of Teaching Service, Subject Teacher Line, KULT-A.
INSTITUTION National Swedish Board of Education, Stockholm.
PUB DATE Oct 74
NOTE 13p.
JOURNAL CIT School Research Newsletter; n 20 Oct 1974

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Job Satisfaction; Self Concept; *Self Evaluation; *Surveys; *Teacher Evaluation; *Teachers; Teaching Conditions

ABSTRACT

This bulletin describes a project that identifies factors influencing qualified subject teachers' self-perceived satisfaction and professional self-realization to make improvements in the school of education training system. Two instruments were used in this study: a test called "Teachers Today" and a questionnaire. The test, based on teachers' quotations concerning their duties, was constructed to cover factors relating to job satisfaction and contentment and to opportunities for developing ideas and initiatives in the course of work. This instrument contains evaluative aspects, including the degree of acceptance or rejection of the quotations and evaluation of the professional importance of the problem, expressed by ratings on a 4-point scale. The questionnaire, based on inventories of factors relevant to the teaching profession, concerns working conditions and job satisfaction in the profession. These instruments were administered after each school year for three years. Group discussions were also used to follow up on qualified teachers who have taken part in former studies. A plan is being drawn up for processing this interview material. (A diagram is included to illustrate the general disposition of the project.) (PD)

SCHOOL RESEARCH newsletter

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October 1974 Current project 1974:20

ED 100848

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Title of project: Qualitative evaluation of teaching service, subject teacher line, KULT-Ä

Project no.: 511

In progress at: The Institute of Education, Linköping School of Education

Scientific leader: Ass. Professor Karl Henrik Eriksson

Project leader: Thord Erasmie, Lecturer at the School of Education

Other personnel: Karin Kolsberg-Erzell, research assistant

1 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEMS

A project concerning the evaluation of teacher trainirg (KUL-Ä) has been in progress for some time at the Institute of Education of the Linköping School of Education. The evaluation of teaching service entitled KULT-Ä (T standing for "service" in Swedish and Ä for "subject teacher line) represents a continuation and follow-up of this initial project.

In view of the variegated tasks and roles confronting the teachers of today and tomorrow, and due among other things

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to the abundance of lines and educational routes of various kinds and with different student structures (children - young persons - adults), such general terms as teacher suitability, referring to teachers generally, would seem to be growing less and less appropriate. This is particularly true of the training of subject teachers, where both the choice of subjects and the level of training are probably bound up with personal development as a whole. The proposals recently submitted by the SIA Commission (on the Internal Work of Schools) are also bound to have repercussions on teacher training.

Instead of speaking in terms of "suitability for the teaching profession" as hitherto, it would probably be more fruitful to approach the problem from the opposite angle, i.e. by asking what factors can be shown in the individual case to result in a teacher with a certain training background and combination of subjects feeling satisfied with and/or successful in his profession to a greater or lesser degree. It is also important to know whether these factors can be influenced by certain elements of teacher training in the subject teacher line.

In view of the above, there would seem to be less and less prospect of obtaining reliable outward criteria of suitability for the teaching profession. Criteria of this kind are bound to refer to the school of today, not the school of tomorrow, and they are liable to remain in use for too long without revision. The question to be asked is therefore no longer "Are we choosing the right people?" but: "Given the material we have to start with, what can teacher training do to provide work satisfaction, the experience of success and the opportunity of professional self-realization?" This would seem to be a more realistic objective, at least where subject teachers are concerned.

The question thus posed requires methods for the improved

guidance of trainee teachers and counselling as training proceeds. Guidance and counselling may possibly be given in the form of group discussions with trainees, as has been the practice under this project since the spring term 1972. As new demands are made of teachers regarding pupil care outside the classroom in connection with the various activities involved by an extended school day, and as existing demands are intensified concerning welfare functions and "contribution to the personal development of the pupil", new teachers must of course be equipped to meet these demands. How is this to be done and is it possible to evaluate the attainment of the overriding goals of teacher training?

The object of the KULT project is to translate these questions into practical terms. The general disposition of the project and its relation to the KULT-Ä project are illustrated in fig. 1. As can also be seen from the figure, the project is divided into a macro and a micro level.

There are many reasons for this distinction:

A. The response frequency for the entirely anonymous questionnaires and forms concerning conditions of service etc. sent to trainee teachers with a certain combination of subjects (i.e. those taking part in the KUL-Ä project the previous term) at all schools of education in Sweden has been remarkably low.

B. One is hardly likely to be able to capture a sufficient number of important factors in teaching service by means of the written completion of questionnaires and suchlike.

C. The possiblilities of conducting action research - i.e. achieving some form of conditioning - at macro level without direct personal contact must be practically nil.

For these and other reasons the study has been arranged in the manner shown in figure 1.

Fig. 1. Survey Design, Kult-Ä

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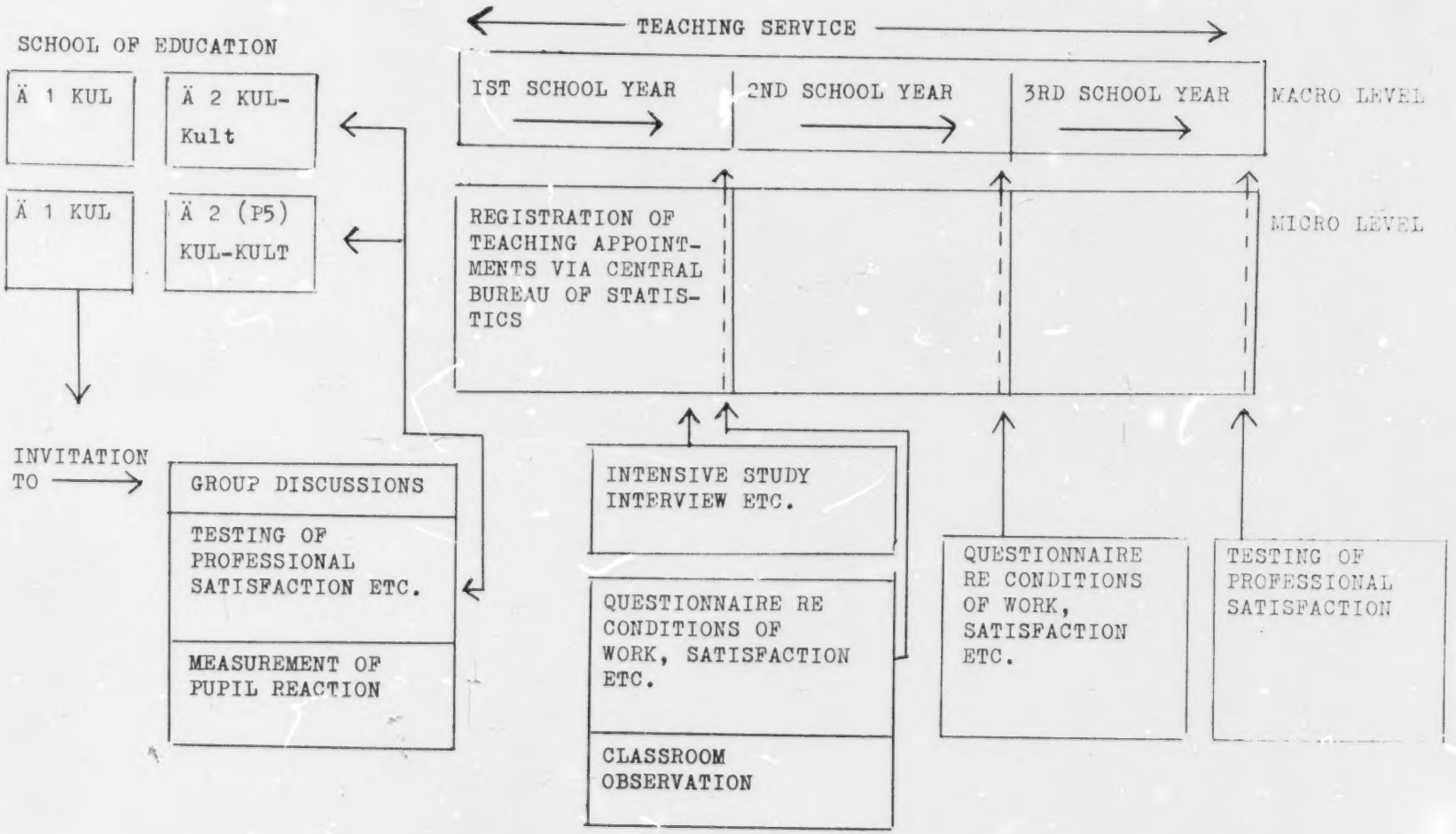

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1.1 Construction of materials and instruments

The instruments used in the macro study are a test called "Teachers Today" and a questionnaire concerning working conditions, satisfaction etc. in the profession. The former is based on quotations, from the daily and professional press, of statements by teachers concerning their duties etc., while the latter is based on inventories of factors relevant to the teaching profession, seen from the point of view of needs.

The instrument entitled "Teachers Today" was constructed with a view to covering both factors which are conceivably connected with job satisfaction and contentment and factors which are conceivably related to opportunities of developing ideas and initiatives in the course of work, i.e. something of what is commonly termed self-realization. The instrument contains two distinct evaluative aspects, namely the degree of acceptance or rejection of the quotation and an evaluation of the professional importance of the problem, expressed by ratings on a four-point scale. The version offered most recently has also been made to include a number of questions without fixed alternative answers calling for a free characterization by the trainee teacher of the nature of good and bad teaching respectively. The questionnaire ends with a graphic rating of the view taken by the respondent of his teaching service in these respects.

A Varimax factor analysis was undertaken during the autumn term 1973 of data collected at the end of the spring term 1973 with reference to all trainee subject teachers (Ä1+Ä2) at the School of Education. Nineteen factors could be extracted by Kaiser's criterion, and these 19 factors account for 80 per cent of the total variance. Only items with loadings at the 1 and 5 per cent levels respectively were included in the analysis. The proposed interpretation of the first factor, which is also that accounting for the greatest vari-

ance, could be stated as "positive pupil contact, sense of community together with the pupils and readiness to assume responsibility for their personal development", that of the second factor being "conditions of work and satisfaction", that of the third "positive attitude to pupil welfare and to being able to express one's personality in teaching", that of the fourth "low level of demands regarding pupil welfare", that of the fifth "critical attitude to training at the school of education", while, lastly, the interpretation of the sixth factor was stated as "assertion of principles and demand for certain outward order without any closer penetration of and involvement in the situation of the pupils". Interpretations have been proposed for the remaining factors, but the above will suffice as examples.

The instrument was administered during the latter part of the autumn term 1973 and the spring term 1974 to all trainees throughout the country involved in the KUL-Ä project and to all Ä2 trainee subject teachers at Linköping. This material is now undergoing factor analysis in the same way as before in order to see whether the same factors occur in the new populations. The answers given by the trainees to the open questions have been categorized on a nominal scale regarding characterizations of good and bad teaching and have formed the basis of a Q sorting carried out by trainee teachers, educational psychology lecturers and others. Here too the response percentage was regrettably low. The procedure will be repeated with new groups of trainee teachers at the end of the autumn term 1974. Processing will follow the methods described above, the aim being to see whether the same factors can be identified in the partly new conditions entailed by the new teaching practice organization introduced as from the autumn term 1974. The results of the tests will be reported separately.

Another purpose of the KULT-Ä project is to follow the newly qualified teachers during their first year of service. Hith-

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erto the above mentioned instruments have been administered at the end of the Ä2 term at the schools of education according to the 1971 scheme of studies. A questionnaire concerning working conditions and satisfaction etc. in the teaching profession has been constructed by the project research assistant Karin Kolsberg-Erzell. A separate report of the results of this work will be issued shortly.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to follow up certain samples of newly qualified teachers who have previously participated in KUL-Ä, in order to see how they experience and cope with their new working situations.

As was stated earlier, the project represents an attempt, by way of self-evaluation, to elicit factors which appear to influence the teacher's job satisfaction and his contentment with his work. One of the methods which can be used on large groups is that of the questionnaire study. The questionnaire employed here covers different aspects of the teaching profession in terms of needs psychology. These are expressed in a number of statements which the respondents have to rate on a Likert scale. The questionnaire used for the survey comprised 42 items. The survey group was made up of 160 subject teachers attending a study day in Linköping in the autumn term 1973. Of these 106 completed the questionnaire while 54 refrained from doing so, giving a 34 per cent drop-out.

The main purpose of the survey being to evolve a practical measuring instrument, it included among other things a factor analysis of the material. The survey was also designed to give a certain general picture of the teacher's job satisfaction, identify the sub-factors of their work with which teachers were dissatisfied, identify sub-factors in their work which teachers consider to be important and, finally, to make certain comparisons in these respects between different groups of teachers with different teaching experience

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or teaching different subjects. This resulted in a revised questionnaire comprising 10 sub-scales or main factors. With the aid of factor analysis, a number of items were deleted because they were found to be excessively multi-dimensional and diffuse.

The final version of the questionnaire comprises 32 items.

The group of teachers investigated considered that, taken as a whole, their work offered variety, and they were satisfied with their pay, opportunities of in-service training, the teaching aids available etc. On the other hand they were dissatisfied with promotion prospects, their opportunities of influencing planning in school, the way in which teaching duties were regulated by the authorities etc.

However, the survey did not reveal any significant differences between the values and the views of their work entertained by different groups of teachers, whether these groups were divided according to subjects or according to length of teaching experience.

The questionnaire is now to be tested on new groups of teachers and trainee teachers who have taken part in the KUL-Ä project. Qualified teachers who have taken part in the KUL-Ä project will be tested again at a later stage using the above mentioned instrument "Teachers Today", to see whether any changes have occurred which can be related to length of service.

We will leave the description of the macro level of the project at this point for the time being. The groups of teachers that have taken part in KUL-Ä and are then invited to participate in KULT-Ä are identified via teacher register data in such a way that it can be seen from a person's combination of subjects and Dip. Ed. date whether he or she

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should have been included in the KUL-Ä project or not. In the parallel study at micro level, on the other hand, the project management is in constant personal touch with the former trainees.

1.2 Group discussions with trainee teachers

In view of the heavy drop out rate in the fully anonymous completion of questionnaire material, and also because macro studies using an objective testing procedure of the kind mentioned in 1.1, supra, are not considered a very suitable means of identifying subtle changes of attitudes and preferences, activities have come to centre more and more on micro studies in the form of group discussions and the following up, after a certain number of terms, of qualified teachers who have taker part in the former studies. The intended design of subsequent work is illustrated in Figure 1.

Group discussions in the autumn term 1973 involved 42 trainees during their teaching practice term. The trainees were divided into 6 groups each numbering about 7 persons. Assistants Sune Almroth, Margareta Bergman, Kenneth Forslund and Karin Kolsberg-Erzell acted as group leaders. Two of the groups were based on Tranås, 1 on Västervik, 2 on Norrköping and 1 on Linköping on account - among other things - of the travelling and subject combinations involved (activities hitherto seem to have demonstrated the undesirability of excessively homogeneous or heterogeneous subject groups). A written evaluation was undertaken by the assistants at the end of each meeting. Exemples of these evaluations will be included in subsequent reports. A written evaluation was made at the final meeting by all the trainee teachers taking part. This evaluation shows that the "declared benefit" derived from the discussiors varied as between different trainees. Briefly, the trainees can be said to have wished for more steering by their group leaders, long-term planning of the meetings for the term, not more than 7 persons per

group, opportunities of inviting experts on methods (e.g. teachers from experimental and demonstration schools) to attend the meetings, more homogeneous groups and shorter sessions than the 4 lessons devoted to each meeting.

Group discussions during the spring term 1974 involved 29 trainee teachers, divided into 4 groups of 6-8 persons each. These groups were led by Assistants Almroth and Kolsberg-Erzell and also by K.H. Eriksson, lecturer at the School of Education, meetings being held by 2 groups in Linköping and 2 in Norrköping. For the first time a leader was appointed who was also teaching the group of trainees concerned (with 1/4 teaching duties). According to the participants, in this particular case at least no disturbance had resulted to relationships in the group. Work is now in progress on the evaluation of activities during the spring term. Jan Hedegård is at present engaged in the compilation of a report on group discussions during the school year 1972-1973 and the autumn term 1973. The report is expected to appear during the autumn term 1974.

1.3 Intensive studies of trainee teachers previously involved in the KULT-Ä project

During the spring term 1974, Karin Kolsberg-Erzell undertook an intensive study of the trainee teachers who took part in group discussions during the spring term 1973. They were now scattered throughout the greater part of Sweden, apart from 3 teaching in Norway (Halden) and 1 in Finland (Åland). The intensive study entailed accompanying the teachers for a complete school day, giving them a questionnaire to complete concerning their work situation, their job satisfaction and opportunities of self-realization, and also conducting a tape-recorded interview on the subject of the teachers' work situation, their experiences of critical incidents and their educational attitudes. A plan is at present being drawn up for processing this interview material.

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2 PURPOSES

The purposes of the project can be summarized as follows:

a. Efforts to devise criteria of "job satisfaction and self-realization in the teaching profession" and of the factors influencing self-experienced success and the feeling of self-realization in one's work.

b. Efforts to devise possible ways of influencing the factors in teacher training that are conceivably connected with the above criteria.

c. Experimental activities to ascertain whether some of these factors can be influenced by group discussions.

In other words, efforts are being made, by studying the qualified teacher, to identify factors influencing the teacher's self-perceived satisfaction and his sense of and opportunities of self-realization and success in his profession. After these factors have been explored, the plan is to make an inventory of the extent to which they have been taken into account in teacher training. On the strength of this analysis, proposals can then be made concerning possible improvements to the school of education training system in these respects.

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Address:

Institutionen för pedagogik
Lärarhögskolan
Box 3129
S-580 03 LINKÖPING